

# Meeting Notes

**DATE:** October 25, 2006

**LOCATION:** Flagstaff City Hall

**TOPIC:** I-40 Regional Transportation Profile Stakeholder Meeting

**ATTENDEES:**

Arnold Burnham, ADOT

Hugh Louch, Cambridge Systematics

Tim Cowan, Camp Navajo

LTC Adrian Nagel, Camp Navajo

Joe Donaldson, City of Flagstaff

Salisa Norstog, Navajo DOT

Chris Fetzer, NACOG

Matt Ryan, Coconino BOS

Chuck Gillick, ADOT Regional Traffic

John Speirs, Coconino County

John Harper, ADOT Flagstaff

David Wessel, FMPO

Jason Hurd, Intrinsic

James Zumpf, ADOT

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James Zumpf of ADOT gave an introduction to the I-40 Regional Transportation Profile project and the context for the stakeholder meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. Hugh Louch of Cambridge Systematics presented a brief summary of the project tasks, schedule, and objectives for the stakeholder meeting. Stakeholders were invited to contribute information on needs and deficiencies along the I-40 corridor, including those related to future development, safety, freight, roadway conditions and other issues. Stakeholder comments are listed below and grouped into the major categories of discussion.

## Development

- A potential theme park is under consideration in Williams. Park organizers are halfway through a three year legislative window to assemble \$500 million in financing. Theme park organizers are currently assembling land. The park is estimated to receive two million visitors per year and capture 40 percent of Grand Canyon visitors. The hope is also to attract visitors from southern Arizona and Nevada. An Arizona State Railroad Museum in Williams is also being considered and financing is part of the theme park package.
- A new industrial park partially related to the theme park is also under consideration.

- The Bellemont residential development north of I-40 has 350 residential units, and 275 more units were just approved. The potential exists for up to several thousand units to be built in the future. Demand for this development and that in other towns outside Flagstaff is being driven by increased housing costs in Flagstaff.
- Camp Navajo is in the process of starting an installation master plan. A veterans cemetery is being planned on the northeast side of the property. Camp Navajo has an aggressive range development plan that includes more training events and may become the premier National Guard training site in Arizona.
- An RV park has been approved for the Bellemont area.
- A private industrial park is planned west of the Bellemont interchange, south of I-40.
- A 4,000-unit Villagio development is under preliminary consideration in west Flagstaff near Woody Mountain Road, although the future is uncertain.
- A forest land swap around the Flagstaff Airport could increase private lands and development in south Flagstaff. Though it would be accessed primarily from I-17, it would draw traffic from I-40 and put pressure on the future of the proposed Fourth Street TI.
- The City of Flagstaff plans to run a water pipeline from Red Gap Ranch (approx. MP 240) into the city. The city is planning for use of easements and right-of way along the north side of I-40.
- A casino is being considered between Route 66 and I-40, south of I-40.
- The Hopi are considering a casino.
- Casinos proposed for Twin Arrows and Winslow are not going forward.
- Navajo Nation casinos are proposed on SR 89 in the Coal Mine community, near Cameron and in Houck at the New Mexico border.
- A shopping center north of Sanders is being developed.
- The Hopi Tribe has acquired land along I-40, part of which is tied to a wind farm.
- An oil refinery has been proposed on Hopi land near Holbrook.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about land-use planning and regulations along I-40. Development needs to address access to I-40 and easements need to be established early in the process.

## Freight

- In the Bellemont/Camp Navajo area an enhanced use lease is in place for an 800-acre storage area with an intermodal component. Camp Navajo is working with shippers to develop the industrial park and provide remote container storage for port operations in Los Angeles. Camp Navajo was the site selected for development by the Northern Arizona freight work conducted by Don Brazeale.

- The Camp Navajo developer, Corvis Industrial, is pushing for an oriented strand board (OSB) plant (an OSB plant manufactures wood panels for building construction from thin diameter trees). It is currently awaiting a contract with the Forest Service to harvest the trees.
- The Bellemont trucking center is being reconstructed by Pilot Travel Centers and will likely attract more truckers.
- Bellemont is being considered as a location for a transloading facility to switch shipments between rail and truck for final destination.
- Camp Navajo has existing rail access and its own locomotives. BNSF only picks up freight.
- An old proposal for a rail depot in New Lands appears to have stalled.
- Very few locations exist for truckers to rest and gain information about the roadway along the entire length of I-40. ITS can play a role in meeting this need.

### **Traffic Interchanges**

- A Lone Tree TI study is expected to begin soon.
- A Route 89 bypass is under consideration and a connection with a TI to the west may be needed.
- Flagstaff is seeking opportunities to cross or connect to I-40 through the city, ideally every one half to one mile.
- A second interchange may be needed in Bellemont to accommodate anticipated traffic.
- A Flagstaff city regional plan amendment calls for a Woody Mountain Road TI pending appropriate studies. There may also be a new TI with I-17. These proposed TIs would be closer than typically allowed to existing TIs and therefore may present safety concerns.
- Ranch TIs along I-40 are numerous, and sometimes are located on only one side of the interstate. These TIs provide access to thousands of acres of ranchlands and are used by a small number of people. Many of the ranch TIs are substandard, and developments that increase traffic on I-40 will create the need to rebuild many of them.

### **Other Issues**

- The MoveAZ statewide long-range transportation plan created an expectation that certain projects would continue to move forward. For example, Move AZ included a project to widen I-40 to three lanes through Flagstaff.
- The ability to cross I-40 by vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and wildlife is a major concern. The issue is not only access to I-40, but the availability of crossing points. A need may exist to build overpasses or underpasses in urban areas such as Flagstaff to allow movements across the interstate.

- Traffic crashes involving animal hits, particularly elk, are increasing dramatically along I-40. Animal crossings are needed. Outside Payson, ADOT is doing a study of overpasses and underpasses with corrals. Game & Fish and U.S. Fish & Wildlife should be consulted. Animal hit data should be reviewed to identify concentrations of crashes.
- Significant astronomy work is ongoing in northern Arizona, and lighting is a major local issue, especially around traffic interchanges.
- Remote sensing could be used for traffic counts. The local U.S. Geological Survey is a pioneer in remote sensing.
- According to FHWA, interstates should not be viewed as local through streets. An assessment of arterial connections along the corridor is needed.
- I-40 is past its useful life and needs to be reconstructed, although Federal involvement is likely needed.
- Some areas of I-40 do not have cell phone coverage, and installation of call boxes should be considered.
- Camp Navajo is being considered as a safe site for the governor in case of evacuation.